

Message Text

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S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT GODFREY SPERLING, JR. BY-LINER,
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, HEADED
"HOW JIMMY CARTER MAKES DECISIONS."

2. NO QUESTION IS BEING ASKED MORE OFTEN IN THIS CITY
THAN THE BIG ONE ABOUT THE NEW PRESIDENT: "HOW DOES HE
MAKE DECISIONS?"

3. AT THIS POINT THERE ARE SEVERAL ANSWERS--SOME COMING
FROM MR. CARTER'S CLOSE ASSOCIATES AND SOME, LESS
FRIENDLY, COMING FROM HIS CRITICS:

4. YOUNG JACK WATSON, WHO HEADS MR. CARTER'S TRANSITION
ORGANIZATION, PAINTS A PICTURE OF A JIMMY CARTER WHO
"TESTS HIS DECISIONS THOROUGHLY" BEFORE COMING TO HIS
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FINAL POSITION.

5. PROVIDING AN EXAMPLE TO REPORTERS RECENTLY, MR.
WATSON SAID: "THE GOVERNOR WILL SAY, 'JACK, HAM, AND
CHARLIE, I'M LEANING THIS WAY ON THIS SUBJECT. WHAT
DO YOU THINK?'

6. "THEN HE'LL LISTEN TO WHAT OUR OPINIONS ARE. THEN, AT SOME POINT, HE'LL SAY, I'M GOING TO DO THIS.' THEN THE MATTER IS CLOSED, AND WE WON'T DISCUSS IT AGAIN."

7. MR. WATSON AND OTHER AIDES SAY THAT MR. CARTER "IS NOT A CONSENSUS SEEKER OR FINDER IN HIS APPROACH TO MAKING DECISIONS."

8. INSTEAD, SAYS MR. WATSON, LONG BEFORE THE PRESIDENT-ELECT REACHES THE POINT WHERE HE IS TESTING HIS CONCLUSIONS HE HAS TALKED TO MANY EXPERTS WITH VARYING POINTS OF VIEW.

9. "HE REALLY LISTENS TO PEOPLE," MR. WATSON SAYS. "HE IS OPEN TO MANY VIEWS."

10. THERE IS ON THE OTHER HAND A LINE OF CRITICAL THOUGHT EMERGING HERE WHICH CONTENTS THAT MR. CARTER MAY NOT BE A "CONSENSUS MAN" IN MAKING DECISIONS BUT THAT HIS VIEWS ON SOME SUBJECTS, PARTICULARLY APPOINTMENTS, CAN OFTEN BE TRACED TO THE LAST PERSON HE CONFERRED WITH.

11. THESE CRITICS CLAIM (AND MR. CARTER DENIES) THAT THIS "LAST-MAN" THESIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY APPARENT IN WHAT THEY DISCERN AS CHANGEABLE CARTER DECISIONS ON WHETHER OR NOT HE IS GOING TO MOVE QUICKLY TO A BIG, QUICK TAX REBATE.

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12. THEY SAY THERE HAVE BEEN PRESSURES FROM MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHICH HAVE PERSUADED MR. CARTER TO REVERSE HIMSELF AND NOW INDICATE HIS FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE A QUICK PROGRAM TO RELIEVE JOBLESSNESS--AND NOT A TAX CUT.

13. CARTER AIDES, HOWEVER, SAY THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGEABLENESS ON THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S PART: THAT MR. CARTER HAS SIMPLY BEEN APPROACHING MANY IMPORTANT PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE CHOICE OF HIS TOP HANDS IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMY, IN HIS USUAL, CAREFUL, THOROUGH, DELIBERATE WAY. THEY ADD THAT WHAT SOME SEE AS AN ALTERING OF CARTER'S POSITION HAS MERELY BEEN A PRELIMINARY SHIFT IN THE CARTER POINT OF VIEW AS HE STILL MOVES FORWARD TO HIS FINAL DECISION.

14. "THE GOVERNOR SIMPLY IS FOLLOWING THE SAME CAREFUL PROCESS HE HAS USED IN SELECTING HIS VICE-PRESIDENT," MR. WATSON ASSERTS.

15. ANY PRESIDENT WILL GET CRITICISM ABOUT HIS DECISIONS, AND THIS ONE IS GETTING THEM EARLY SINCE HIS PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IS SURFACING SO VERY EARLY.

16. SOMETIMES THE CRITICISM DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. SOME, FOR EXAMPLE, SAY HE IS RESPONDING TOO MUCH TO PRESSURES FROM GROUPS OR PEOPLE TO WHOM HE IS IN DEBT. MR. CARTER DENIES THIS.

17. BUT OTHERS (IRONICALLY ENOUGH) CRITICIZE MR. CARTER FOR SAYING HE OWES NOTHING TO ANYONE; ISN'T SUBJECT TO PRESSURES FROM ANYONE; AND ISN'T RESPONDING TO INFLUENCE FROM ANYONE.

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18. THESE CRITICS SAY MR. CARTER DOES OWE MANY PEOPLE IN TERMS OF APPOINTMENTS AND PROGRAMS -- PARTICULARLY THE BLACKS, WITHOUT WHOSE ALMOST TOTAL VOTE HE WOULD HAVE LOST THE ELECTION.

19. FINALLY, THERE ARE SOME WISE VETERAN OBSERVERS WHO WARN THAT IT IS FAR TOO EARLY TO "GET A HANDLE" ON THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AS A DECISIONMAKER. SAID ONE SUCH OBSERVER AFTER HEARING MR. WATSON DEFEND HIS BOSS ON THIS SUBJECT:

20. "ONLY AFTER CARTER BECOMES PRESIDENT WILL WE REALLY FIND OUT HOW HE MAKES DECISIONS. EVEN HE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT HE MAY WELL BE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON ONCE HE REALLY HAS THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RUNNING THIS NATION.

21. "PERHAPS HE'LL END UP FEELING HE MUST MAKE THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS IN THE SILENCE OF HIS OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE, ALL BY HIMSELF. FURTHER, SINCE HE IS SAID TO BE SOMEWHAT OF A LONER, HE MAY REVERT TO SUCH LONE DECISIONS QUITE READILY. WE SIMPLY HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE."
(END TEXT)
ROBINSON

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